

IDEQ Coordinated Drinking Water Activities on Cyanotoxins

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To address the rapidly emerging public health risks associated with toxin producing cyanobacteria for drinking water sources, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has been educating operators and coordinating efforts with other DEQ water programs, and with Idaho Health and Welfare to address the issues.

Beginning in the Summer of 2018, Idaho DEQ kicked off a pilot with five volunteer operators around the state to educate them, have them sample their source and finished water for presence of cyanotoxins, and to do risk/emergency preparedness activities for a detection of cyanotoxin in their finished water. In 2016 EPA issued health advisories for cyanotoxins, Microcystin and Cylindrospermopsin in drinking water.

As a follow-up to the pilot which concluded for the 2018 season in September, Idaho DEQ hosted two workshops in November for all surface water system operators, city officials, and emergency response personnel to educate them on cyanotoxins and conduct an emergency response exercise for detection of cyanotoxins above the health advisory levels. Idaho DEQ will present the lessons learned and possible future opportunities.